Inside Wallops

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CHIPS Begins Study on the Birthplace of Solar Systems

The Cosmic Hot Interstellar Plasma Spectrometer (CHIPS) satellite is living up to the adage "good things come in small packages," as the suitcase-size spacecraft is entering its second month of providing data to scientists about the birthplace of solar systems.

Launched on Jan. 12, 2003, from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., (below) CHIPS is exploring the very hot, very low-density gas in the vast spaces between the stars, known as the interstellar medium, searching for important clues about the formation and evolution of galaxies.

NASA Photo

The interstellar medium literally contains the seeds of future stars. All the stars we see were once formed out of the same kind of diffuse gas and dust. When the gas cools and collapses, it forms clumps that scientists believe evolve into stars and planets.

One of the biggest puzzles in astrophysics is the process that turns this very diffuse, dust, hot and cold gas into stars.

"We are very excited that the satellite and CHIPS instrument are working as designed and providing excellent data," said Dr. Mark Hurwitz, CHIPS principal investigator from the University of California, Berkeley. "We look forward to gathering data during the next 12 months on this fairly unexplored region of space," he said.

After being in space a mere three weeks, CHIPS began gathering data February 2. Hurwitz said during the early phase of science operations, the teams will continue to fine tune the spacecraft and science instrument.

Since the CHIPS satellite launch, the operations team at SpaceDev in Poway, Calif., and the science team at Berkeley, have been checking out the spacecraft's power, thermal and control systems, communications, and initializing the scientific instrument.

The CHIPS mission, the first NASA University-Class Explorer (UNEX) mission, cost about $16 million, which includes flight hardware, integration and launch vehicle, data analysis and mission operations.

The Office of Space Science, NASA Headquarters, Washington sponsors the mission. The project is managed at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility and the Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md.

For detailed information about CHIPS and its mission on the Internet, visit:

http://chips.ssl.berkeley.edu
or
http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/topstory/2002/1217chips.html

VALPE Gets Good Data

"While we are still analyzing the data from the flight, (Terrier-Orion 41.039, Wallops Island, November 2002), I am confident in saying that we achieved all of our comprehensive mission criteria.

I would give this mission a 100% success rating. All flight data was received, recorded and delivered to me in a timely manner. No vehicle failures were encountered and both separation events were successful.

I was very impressed by the level of support and professionalism of all members of your sounding rocket team. They were very responsive to our needs throughout the design, test and flight process. They were exceptionally helpful and flexible while working through our ground testing when we had problems with one of our experiments and were key in helping us meet our launch date." ……. Charlotte Gerhart, Air Force Research Laboratory.

CSOC Supports Alaska Campaign

by Michael Conger

Consolidated Space Operations Contract (CSOC) personnel are in Alaska operating Ground Network (Code 452) equipment located at the Poker Flat Research Range in support of the Winter 2003 NASA Sounding Rocket Campaign.

Keith Koehler Photo

CSOC personnel staff the Mobile Range Control Center.

Range telemetry support is being provided by two S-band auto-track systems, incorporating an 8-foot dish and a 16-foot dish located on Middle Range. An 8-meter Transportable Orbital Tracking Systems (TOTS), one antenna system of the Alaska Ground Station (AGS), also is being used on Middle Range for telemetry support of the campaign.

Other range instrumentation includes: the C-band radar system (Radar # 10) for vehicle tracking, surveillance radar for local air traffic monitoring, and a meteorological balloon inflation building for upper air sondes.

WFF also sent the Mobile Range Control Center/Range Safety Command/Destruct and Real-Time Instantaneous Impact Prediction System (MRCCS) to Poker.

The MRCCS is providing remote wind-weighing, payload recovery, sounding rocket and/or payload real-time command control, and real-time metrics display data.

Wallops Shorts

On the Road

Ed Parrott, Public Affairs Office, Teacher-on-Loan, participated in a Career Event at Westover Elementary School on March 7.

Dave Pierce, NASA University Class Projects Office, spoke to kindergarten students at Salisbury Christian School on March 10.

C'mon Spring!

by Ted Wilz, Senior Meteorologist

February held true to form and was a bleak, cloudy, cold month for the Eastern Shore.

Although no new record high or low temperatures were set during February, temperatures averaged one degree below normal, which is not a good trend considering the spiraling cost of fuel.

The coldest temperature of the month was a 13 degree reading on February 16. The warmest temperature was a reading of 63 degrees on February 23. A nearly persistent cloud cover and the number of days rain or snow fell actually made February feel much colder.

There were 15 days with measurable precipitation, well above the monthly average of 9 days with 4.16 inches of rain. The normal precipitation for February is 3.34 inches.

This winter's snowy trend continued in February with an additional 4.3 inches falling. February is normally the snowiest month on the Eastern Shore with an average of 3.06 inches.

Once again, as we have done every month this winter, we exceeded the monthly average. Although we have had our share of wintry weather, we have had nowhere the amounts of snowfall recorded at some locations just to the west of us. Being on the coast certainly helps.

What does the weather have in store for us in April? Hopefully, the pleasant weather that usually occurs along the Eastern Shore will make this past winter's weather a fading memory.

During April, average high temperatures start out in the upper 50s, and by the end of the month are in the mid 60s. The highest temperature ever recorded at Wallops was a 93-degree reading that occurred on April 26, 1990.

Low temperatures usually are around 40 degrees at the beginning of April but warm to the upper 40s as May approaches. As opposed to February, the weather on the Shore is very nice in April.

We usually have 10 days with measurable precipitation and average only 2.74 inches of rainfall. April is actually one of our driest months second only to November.

Although temperatures warm up quite comfortably, there are still occasions especially in early April, when we can see morning temperatures below freezing. Freezes in April have occurred as late as April 25 (in 1994). Temperatures as low as 24 degrees have occurred during the month.

Reservations for Government Vehicles

The Wallops Intuitional Consolidated Contract, (WICC) Customer Service Help Desk (x4357) is the contact for reserving government vehicles.

WICC customer service representatives, located in Building F-16, will be available between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. to accept reservations and issue keys to government motor pool vehicles. Call HELP, x4357

Centennial of Flight Milestone

77 years ago on March 16, 1926, Robert Goddard launched the world's first liquid-powered rocket.

Alias for E-mail

An e-mail aliasing capability is now available to customers that don't like the @nasa.gov e-mail address assigned to them. Goddard employees may choose one alias to use with their email (e.g. Eudora, Outlook). If you are satisfied with your assigned email name no action is required.

The choices for an alias are limited to the current ones in the x500 system. Choose one alias. Once you reserve your alias, change the "reply to" and/or "from" fields to reflect your new @nasa.gov address.

For further information on this feature, contact Mike Richter on x66-6376.

Procedures for reserving an alias:
1. Go to ***https://isd.jsc.nasa.gov/onenasaemail***

2. Click on "Reserve an Alias".

3. Click on "I forgot/don't have a password."

4. Enter your User Name, which is your current @nasa.gov address (without "@nasa.gov").

5. Click on "Email me my Password."

6. Click on "Back to the Login Page."

7. Your password will arrive in your email box almost immediately. Once you get your password, go back to the login page and enter your User Name and password.

8. Click the "Login" button and you should see your choices.

9. Select the alias that you would like to reserve from the list displayed.

10. Click "Submit."

11. You will receive a confirmation message on your screen and via email.

12. Your new alias will not take effect until noon the next day, wait until that time to change your "Reply to" address in your email client.

Aerobics Club News

The Wallops Aerobics Club will hold a new six-week session starting Monday, March 10.

Ta'i Chi class will continue on Thursdays, from 11:30 a.m. to Noon, in the back of Building F3. Call John Brinton on x1099 for more details.

The following classes will be offered:
Monday
Noon to12:30 p.m — Toning
5 to 6 p.m. — Step Aerobics/Toning

Tuesday
Noon to 12:30 p.m. — Aerobics

Wednesday
Noon to 12:30 — Toning
5 to 6 p.m. — Step Aerobics/Toning

Thursday
11:30 a.m. to Noon — Ta'i Chi

Thursday
Noon to 12:30 p.m. — Aerobics

Friday
Noon to 12:30 p.m. — Toning
4:40 to 5:40 p.m. — Toning

For more information, call Annette Conger on x2596 or Jeanette Smolinski on x1512. Visit the Aerobics Club web page at: ***http://wwr.wff.nasa.gov/WAC/***

Computer Gaming Club Forming at Wallops

The Wallops Exchange and Morale Association, (WEMA) and the Morale Activities Committee (MAC) are starting a computer gaming club at Wallops. Anyone interested is invited to join in for the first face-to-face meeting of the new Wallops computer gaming.

Where: Rocket Club, Building F-3
When: March 12
Time: 5 p.m.

Meeting agenda:
- Distribute and review charter
- Distribute and review FAQ
- Review the survey
- Election of officers
- Discuss establishing dues/amount
- Discuss online computer gaming
- Discuss first LAN party
- Discuss alternate venues and meeting times
- Schedule next meeting

Organizers:
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Editor Betty Flowers